



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM



INSTRUCTIONS FOR PET-FOCUSED GRANT APPLICATIONS

The following information provides important instructions and examples that apply to Applicants submitting Pet-Focused applications to the Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program (the Program). Please read thoroughly the Program information under the **gold banners** and the application-specific information under the **green banners**. A clear understanding of the legislated purpose of the Program, the requirements, and the Program specifics is crucial to developing a successful application.

The Program has 3 categories of grant applications: Pet-Focused, Feral Cat-Focused, and Capital Expense/Equipment Requests. Each focus has its own application form and focus-specific instructions.

MAKE SURE you use the correct application form and correct Instructions for your specific category of project before going further.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is offering grants pursuant to [MD. AGRICULTURE Code Ann. § 2-1602 \(2013\)](#). The law stipulates the purpose of the Program as the following:

“The purpose of the Fund is to reduce animal shelter overpopulation and cat and dog euthanasia rates by financing grants to local governments and animal welfare organizations for programs that most efficiently and effectively facilitate and promote the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in the State.”

THE PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

This is a competitive grants program. Applications are not only judged on their own merits, but also against all other applications.

Eligibility criteria that must be met to apply for this grant:

- Municipal or county governments or non-profit animal welfare organizations with tax exempt status under 501 (c)(3) are eligible to apply to facilitate and promote the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs.
- A competitive grant proposal (quoting Agriculture Article, §2-1602, Annotated Code of Maryland):
 1. *Shall target low-income communities and populations to the maximum extent possible and detail how that goal is to be accomplished;*
 2. *May target feral cat populations if MDA determines that this targeting does not violate local law;*
 3. *Shall efficiently and effectively facilitate and promote and increase the provision of spay and neuter services for cats and dogs; and*
 4. *May include public education and outreach components.*
- Grant projects must meet the purpose of the Fund. Grant projects that most effectively and efficiently facilitate, promote and increase spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in Maryland will be given priority.
- Applicants must comply with all other statutory and regulatory requirements pertaining to the Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program. Applicants should familiarize themselves with those provisions of the Maryland Code.
- The Program does not provide support to organizations that have lost their IRS tax-exempt status, have unusually high administrative expenses, or show indicators of financial mismanagement. Applicant organizations

must be in compliance with the state by submitting the Annual Report and Personal Property Return with the State of Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation-Personal Properties Division.

MAKE SURE your organization is in good standing with the IRS and the State of Maryland before starting your application.

- As of April 2016, county or municipal animal control facilities, organizations that are contracted by a county or municipality to provide animal control, or any organization that shelters animals and receives funds from the Program must meet the requirements of Sections 2-1701 through 2-1705 of the Agriculture Article of the Code of Maryland. This law requires shelters have available to the public a “written veterinary care protocol” consistent with the Association of Shelter Veterinarians’ Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, as well as a “written protocol for reclaiming animals”. A copy of the law, the guidelines and an example of a Standards of Care Plan are posted on the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners website: MDA.maryland.gov. Applicants with shelters must be in compliance with the law.
- The Applicant and personnel described in the application must have the qualifications and resources necessary to perform and complete the project proposal.
- Applicants must complete and submit the grant application, with any required accompanied documents as specified in these Instructions and on the application forms, by close of business (before 5:01 PM EST) on or before the posted grant deadline as it appears on the Request for Proposals (RFP) and on the Program webpage: [Maryland Spay and Neuter Grant Program](#).
- Applicants must only propose projects that **result in a net increase in spay and neuter procedures** above the level of service they normally provide or accomplish. These funds cannot be used to maintain the organization’s status quo or replace other funds.
- Applicants, their organizations, and any veterinarians/clinics used should have no history (within the last three years) of violations or fines with Animal Control authorities or the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners in their respective state of licensure. Any history of violations may be a basis for denying funding. If prior violations exist, the Applicant must provide a thorough explanation in the application of the violation and how it has been rectified.
- As part of the Program legislation, MDA is required to collect quarterly shelter survey data from all municipal shelters, which requests information about dog and cat shelter live intakes, and all outcomes. This data is used to track the impact the Program has on intake and euthanasia numbers over time. Applicants should be aware that if awarded a grant, organizations with private shelters must also submit quarterly shelter survey data to MDA.

OBTAINING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be posted on the Program webpage at [Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program](#), Governor’s Grant Office-Maryland Grant Opportunities site at grants.maryland.gov and announced on the MDA website and social media sites.

The applications are accessible via the Maryland OneStop portal, and must be filled out in full and submitted to MDA by close of business (before 5:01 PM EST) on or before the proposal deadline, as stated in the RFP. Accompanied documents may be Word, PDF, or other commonly supported formats.

Links to the applications (along with Instruction documents and other supplemental materials) are available on the [Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program](#) webpage. When completing the application(s), please be as concise as possible, but without sacrificing essential detail. Please check for spelling errors, math errors or inconsistencies, and missing information. Be sure to fill out all required fields. **Incomplete applications will not be eligible for review.**

In addition to the completed application form, all Applicants must provide at least the following:

- **Price Assurance Form(s):** the MDA form filled out by the veterinarian(s) or clinic(s) identified in the application as the veterinary providers. The required form is available on the Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program webpage. This form must have the name of the veterinarian(s)/clinic(s) being used, their respective license number(s) and state of licensure, and the cost detailed on the form must correspond with the cost presented in the application.
- **Tax Information:** For non-government Applicants: a copy of most recent 990 Form (if required) or other appropriate tax form confirming tax exempt status, and proof of registration with State of Maryland (if applicable) is required, as detailed in the *Eligibility and Funding Criteria and Requirements* section above.
- **Map(s)** of the target area.
- **Price Quotes** for budget items (excluding veterinary services and rabies vaccine) over \$500.00.
- **IRS W-9 Form.**

Applicants will receive an automated email notice from the OneStop system confirming receipt of the application.

Once received by MDA, no changes or updates may be made to the application and no additional information may be added, except at MDA's request or with MDA's approval. Applicants may only request a submitted application be withdrawn. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Coordinator prior to submitting their application if they have any questions.

BUDGET BASICS

The minimum amount that can be requested is \$5,000.

There is no maximum grant cap at this time. However, please be aware that the overall Program budget is limited each year and the total request for grants always exceeds available funds. MDA strives to maximize these funds by funding (to the extent possible) those projects that can most efficiently and effectively achieve the purposes of the Program throughout the State. We caution against asking for a substantial percentage of the total Program budget. Applicants can review a [List of Funded Projects on the Program website](#) to get a sense of general funding levels and project overviews.

PLEASE REVIEW the RFP to see the projected overall Program budget for the cycle and take that into consideration when developing your budget.

Also, consider the amount of funds requested relative to your organization's current operating budget and capacity. Applications should clearly establish an organization's capacity to undertake a project and the ability to handle increased staffing and resource needs associated with the project.

Budget items must be detailed and in most cases, justified. Additional information is included in the budget section of the application-specific information to follow.

This is a competitive grant, and while the program will consider the below listed allowable expenses, priority is often given to "clean" applications that do not require significant amounts of additional expenses and devote as much money to funding spay and neuter surgeries as possible.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The following are items or services that may be paid for with grant dollars. If there is an expense that an Applicant wishes to add but does not see here or under the Prohibited Expenses, contact the Program Coordinator for guidance and advice.

STERILIZATION PACKAGE:

The Sterilization Package should be inclusive of the cost per animal from start to finish of the procedure (with the possible exception of Rabies Vaccination-see below). Do not include detailed breakdowns of the veterinary sterilization package unless requested by MDA. MDA expects all grant recipients to meet the Maryland State Board

of Veterinary Medical Examiners minimum standards of care for spay and neuter procedures and care of animals altered under the Program. Your per-animal sterilization cost must include medical staff time, all equipment and medicine, including post-operative pain medicine, as the attending veterinarian deems appropriate for a spay/neuter service.

The cost per sterilization procedure should match the cost agreed to on the Price Assurance form(s) from the provider(s) and included with the application. It is important to understand that the cost per surgery stated on the application form (both in the Project Details Section and the Budget Section) are the costs that the applicant is committing to use, if funded.

MDA understands that prices can differ greatly depending on the type of surgery, animal, location, providers available and other factors. We expect the Applicants to look for the best prices possible but also to consider the cost benefit when transporting animals for longer distances, vs. using slightly more expensive, yet closer providers. In order to maintain flexibility and to take in multiple factors that may influence the cost per surgery, the Program has not yet set a cap on cost per surgery. The SNAB does look closely at this cost and if a cost of services per cat reaches or exceeds \$60.00, or \$120.00 per dog, the applicant should look for ways to reduce costs or be prepared to justify the higher cost as part of the Budget Justification Section.

MAKE SURE the surgical cost per animal on your Price Assurance Form(s), and in the Target and Budget Sections of the application form all match.

RABIES VACCINATION:

A rabies vaccination is required for all animals receiving a spay/neuter procedure with Program funds, if they do not have proof of a current rabies vaccination. All budgets must include the cost of rabies vaccine for each animal. This can be requested as a separate budget line item if not already built in to the Sterilization Package price.

If the Applicant proposes the cost of rabies vaccinations as a separate budget item, the cost is **capped at a maximum of \$5.00 per dose.**

If the cost of the rabies vaccinations is not listed separately, the Applicant needs to indicate how this cost is being covered whether built into the overall cost of the sterilization package or donated as an in-kind contribution.

HIGH QUALITY/HIGH VOLUME (HQHV) SPAY NEUTER TRAINING FOR VETS AND SURGICAL STAFF:

MDA encourages Applicants to prioritize increasing their efficiency and capacity, which will increase the overall availability of spay and neuter services in the State. HQHV training is important since this specialized training will result in long term benefits beyond the lifetime of a project or the Program. Applicants are encouraged to consider including training in their applications and special consideration may be given to Applicants who are requesting funding for this specialized training as part of their proposal. Funding requests for HQHV training may include travel, lodging and course costs. This should be detailed in the budget line items Justification Section as to who would attend, what specific training will be taken, and cost per person per day.

FIRST, COORDINATE with ASPCA Spay/Neuter Alliance (formerly Humane Alliance) to determine which type of HQHV training is best suited for your organization, and provide a statement from them documenting the coordination and explaining the choice of training.

NON-SURGICAL NEUTERING TRAINING:

Training in the proper and safe application of non-surgical zinc neutering (such as neutering with Zeuterin™ injectable solution) is also allowable.

Applicants receiving funds for any training will be required to provide proof of completion to MDA.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES:

This covers medical and non-medical items (durable items such as traps and carriers which can be reused; or exhaustible items such as leads/leashes, temporary ID tags, etc.), that directly result in an increase in the number of spay/neuter procedures and which are necessary to carry out the project. This should NOT include equipment and

supplies used for the sterilization procedures (such as sutures, drugs, veterinarian and technician time, etc.) as those expenses should already be included in the veterinary cost per procedure.

Equipment requests may be part of any application type unless the cumulative total durable equipment request exceeds \$5,000. Requests over \$5,000 must be presented in a Capital Expense Application.

Equipment requests must only be requested if the clinic is licensed and ready for operation.

These items must be justified as necessary to achieving the goals of the project and Program. For durable items (life over 1 year), Applicants must explain how it will have a lasting benefit to the Program purpose beyond the term of the grant. Each piece of equipment must be identified and include a price quote from the supplier.

CHECK FIRST with municipal shelters to see if equipment can be obtained from them as donations or loans and added to your Cost Share Section. Such money-saving efforts may bolster your application's evaluation.

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE:

Travel to/from appointments is often challenging for many people and can affect a pet owner's decision to get their animals altered, and is often an important vital element to a feral cat-related project. We encourage Applicants to consider including a travel assistance element to their project and budget. If your experience has shown this is not the case in your particular area or transportation is routinely handled by volunteers and a budget is not required, please state this in your project description narrative (and consider detailing this as a cost-share item).

Transportation assistance must be calculated using the most current IRS determined rate, and detailed in the budget line item description with a cost per mile, estimated miles per trip, number of trips, and total estimated miles. See <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates> for the current rate.

The cost, time, and expense of travel should be weighed against the use of the closest clinic to the project area and Applicants should clearly justify the travel expense. Applicants are encouraged to communicate with local veterinarians about possible strategies to increase capacity in their immediate area (also see Training above) and hopefully reducing the need to travel great distances. Applicants are encouraged to look for ways to make transportation a cost share item, and thereby leverage grant funds to make their application more competitive.

OUTREACH/TRANSPORTATION/SCHEDULING COORDINATOR:

The Program very rarely will approve funding for staffing. Applicants may request the cost of a temporary NEW staff position for Outreach/Transportation/Scheduling Coordinator. This is only intended to increase staff, not replace or pay for existing personnel and must directly relate to increasing the number of spay and neutering procedures and altered animals by the Applicant.

This position may include coordinating volunteers, participating in community outreach, appointment scheduling and follow-up, transporting of animals to/from surgeries, etc. This position must relate to the activities in the proposed project and the Applicant should be able to show there are special circumstances or other unique challenges requiring funding for a staff position for the project.

- The Applicant must make a strong case in their Budget Justification section for the need for a staff position (see the Application Specific Section for a good example of justification for this type of expense).
- The cap on Program funds for any staff position is **capped at \$12/hr**, inclusive.
- The cost of new staff will only be covered during the period of performance of the grant and not in perpetuity.

The Program will only consider funding this temporary staff position if the application demonstrates that the scope of the project, the number of animals targeted, the target area, and the current staffing of the applying organization warrants it. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to find ways to otherwise cover, reduce, or share this cost whenever possible.**

MARKETING/OUTREACH COSTS:

This may include printing and distribution of outreach material, and other expenses related to outreach to the target community or population. These items must be directly related to spay/neuter and explained in the project outreach plan. Although there is no stated cap on the amount of funds that can be used for marketing, Applicants are encouraged to consider carefully the specific needs of the project and the percentage of the total budget that is being allocated to marketing. Outreach expenses that exceed \$1,000 must be well-justified. Applicants should provide price quotes for outreach items \$500 or more. If proposing signage, the Applicant must include a draft of the text to be used.

SURGICAL EQUIPMENT:

This must be to increase an organization’s capacity to provide low/no cost procedures to the community during and after the period of performance of the project. On Pet and Feral Cat-focused applications, the total cost is capped at \$5,000.

ADDITIONALLY, OTHER FUNDABLE ITEMS SPECIFIC TO CAPITAL EXPENSE APPLICATIONS INCLUDE:

- Durable surgical equipment for outfitting a new low cost spay/neuter clinic or the expansion of services at an existing low cost spay/neuter clinic.
- Durable surgical equipment to retrofit a vehicle to serve as a mobile low-cost spay/neuter clinic.
- Purchase of a new or used equipped mobile clinic to be used as a low-cost spay/neuter clinic.
- Purchase of upgraded equipment if the proposed upgrade will substantially increase surgical capacity.
- Medical supplies needed to operate a new clinic for the first 3 months.

PROHIBITED EXPENSES

The following are items that, while they may have value, are either not necessarily a good allocation of the limited Program funds, or are deemed counter to the policies of the Program and will not be considered.

CO-PAYS:

Requiring a co-pay in connection with any service funded by this Program is not permitted. The cost of sterilization procedures must be all inclusive (materials, veterinary services, and all required pre- and post-operative medicines/exams related to the procedure). Be sure to keep this in mind when developing budget line items and calculating your cost per animal information in the Target section.

OTHER PROCEDURES:

Providing spay/neuter services paid for under this Program cannot be contingent on pet owners and animal caretakers purchasing other services. They may be informed of any additional services that would benefit the animal but they cannot be denied services if they qualify and if the additional services are not of a critical nature.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS:

Proposing a separate sum of money to be set aside for use in special unforeseen medical circumstances is not a fundable expense. **However**, if in the course of a sterilization procedure, complications arise or conditions are discovered that necessitate additional emergency medical treatment, the Project Manager may use some project funds to cover the expense **only with the approval, in writing**, (obtained prior to or immediately after treatment) **from the Program Coordinator**.

FUNDING OF SURGICAL OR CLERICAL PERSONNEL:

The Program funds may not be used to fund permanent or temporary staff, whether it is clerical or surgical. The cost of all surgical staff should be part of the sterilization cost per animal.

OTHER PROHIBITED EXPENSES INCLUDE:

- Overhead, office equipment and supplies, name tags and uniforms.
- Capital campaigns and large construction projects.
- Giveaways (such as promotional items other than pamphlets, postcards and other educational materials).

- Flea treatments, de-worming, ear-cleaning, bathing, e-collars, and microchipping (unless part of a surgical package).
- Web design and hosting, professional photography.
- Vaccines (other than rabies), blood tests and other tests.
- Pet licenses. It is important for government Applicants to note this and find alternative funding for licensing if a requirement for spay/neutering.
- Education curriculum development.
- Conference attendance costs.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS NOT FUNDABLE ON A CAPITAL EXPENSE APPLICATION INCLUDE:

- Equipment for clinics not yet constructed or currently just under construction.
- Office equipment, office supplies, computers, and anything else not required to perform spay/neuter procedures.
- Building construction and building leases or other capital campaign expenditures.
- Reimbursements for equipment already purchased.
- Cost of replacement of old equipment (unless an upgrade will increase capacity).
- Vehicles (other than associated with a mobile clinic).
- Equipment primarily for sheltering animals or maintaining feral colonies after spaying or neutering.
- Personnel costs and salaries for staff.

Applicants who have these types of items as part of their project should find ways to fund them through other sources and can list such items in the “Cost-Sharing and In-Kind Contributions” section of the application (provided they are related to the project and Program purpose).

STILL NOT SURE if something is allowable? Think something should be considered or reconsidered? Contact the Program Coordinator for guidance.

REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

The grant review process begins in April, once the submission window has closed. During this time, MDA conducts a Due Diligence check on all Applicants to confirm eligibility, tax status, standing of project veterinarians and clinics with their respective state veterinary boards, standing with local animal control agencies, and standing with the IRS and the State of Maryland. The Spay and Neuter Advisory Board (SNAB), with input from the Program Coordinator, reviews and evaluates each grant application **competitively** in relation to all applications, with focus on how well the application meets Program requirements and goals, the potential beneficial and measurable impact on shelter intake and euthanasia rates, Applicant experience and capacity, and cost effectiveness of the proposed effort with respect to Program purpose. The SNAB then submits their funding recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary ultimately decides on the final disposition of all applications.

All Applicants are notified by email as promptly as possible after the Secretary’s final funding decision. Emails to Applicants approved for funding will include any changes in scope or budget MDA wishes to implement. At that time the Applicant must notify MDA if they accept the changes and wish to accept the grant as modified, or wish to decline. Emails to Applicants not approved for funding will include reasons for being turned down with any recommendations for future submissions.

MDA sends out grant agreements via OneStop to recipients usually within 30 days following approval. Grant Agreements will be signed via OneStop. Recipients must not commit any funds until the grant agreement has been fully signed by both MDA and the recipient, and the recipient has received their signed copy. **MDA will not release any funds until the Grant Agreement is signed. If the grant agreement is not signed within 30 days, MDA may choose to withdraw the grant offer and reallocate the funds.**

REVIEW the grant agreement example that appends the posted RFP and make sure your organization’s officers (including any legal staff) are aware of the agreement terms and the 30 day limit for signing and returning the agreement to MDA.

SOME COMMON REASONS APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR REJECTED

The most common reason for an application's funding amount to be reduced is simply a lack of available Program funds. Applicants should keep in mind that this is a competitive grants program with a limited annual budget. Unfortunately for this reason it is quite possible that good applications could still be reduced simply due to stiff competition from fellow applicants.

However, there are some other reasons (often avoidable) that have resulted in some applications being turned down, or adversely affected an application's overall ranking and funding level:

AVOID THESE SITUATIONS

Sloppy Numbers: Math errors or inconsistencies in budget items, cost of surgeries, or other areas in the application may be perceived as a tendency towards carelessness and hinders the review process. **This is the most commonly made error to date and tolerance for this has been exhausted.** Applicants should be aware that carelessness of this nature **will adversely** affect an application's ranking.

Disregarding the Program Instructions and Resources: MDA considers reviewing (and adhering to) the Program's instruction documents as part of the application process and NOT steps to be skipped or ignored. It is obvious to MDA and the SNAB during the review process when an Applicant has not read or followed the instructions. The Program has gone to great lengths to provide comprehensive instructions that spell out the purpose of the Program, what is fundable, required information, specific caps on some costs, and prohibited items and activities. Additionally, the Program Coordinator is available to answer any questions and offer guidance and clarification. A reduction in ranking has resulted for applications where it is obvious that the instruction documents and help were disregarded or not utilized.

Incomplete Application or Incorrect Format: All required application fields **MUST** be filled in as stated in the Program and application instructions. An incomplete application will not pass the Due Diligence stage and may be removed from further consideration. Providing an application and its documents in an incorrect format greatly hinders all the many subsequent steps MDA must take in processing the application for the review phase.

Fines and Violations: Applicants with a history of violations with local animal control agencies may be considered ineligible if any history is not addressed in the application, not truthfully indicated in Section A of the application, or is not yet resolved to the satisfaction of the Animal Control authority.

Lack of Clarity or Details: Applications that, by the use of emotional or vague language and lack of specific information, do not clearly convey a specific purpose for their proposed project as it relates to the goals of the Program, will be reduced in ranking. Applicants must provide adequate explanation, information, or shelter data necessary for determining the extent to which it will impact shelter intake and euthanasia are reduced in rank.

Limited Ability: An application that fails to establish Applicant's ability to complete the project will be reduced in rank and most likely rejected.

Poor Presentation: An application that is vague or incomprehensible, or contains highly emotional language or excessive errors will be reduced in rank. Errors can be perceived as a lack of attention to detail. Also, errors (such as misspellings, incomplete sentences, outdated boilerplate language, cut and paste, etc.) and putting information in the wrong section of the application greatly hinders the review process.

Irrelevant Information: Applicants providing too much information that is irrelevant to the task proposed can frustrate, stall, and muddle the review process.

Does Not Increase Capacity: An application's review and rank will be affected if the application does not clearly demonstrate that the funds would be used to increase their capacity (does not show a net increase in sterilizations above what they normally do).

Poorly or Unjustified Budget Items: Poorly described or unjustified budget items result in many questions during the review process and can lead to cuts of budget items and may also contribute to a reduction in the application's funding.

Coordination Not Discussed: Applications that fail to demonstrate any attempt to coordinate with animal control and/or correlation between their project and the intake and euthanasia data from the municipal shelter will result in a rejection.

Too Few Spay/Neuters for Overall Budget: The bulk of a proposed project's funds should go toward sterilization procedures. If an application does not and is not well justified, then the application is likely to be reduced in funding.

Poor Performance History: Applicants with a poor performance on previously funded projects (such as late reporting, unresponsive to requests from MDA, unapproved changes in project scope and expenditures of funds, failure to reach target number of animals without discussion with the Program Coordinator as to reason, etc.) will be considered during the review process and could affect funding.

Duplication: If an application appears to duplicate an existing effort without explanation or justification, it is likely to be rejected.

Failure to Address MDA's Prior Requests or Recommendations: MDA keeps track of all applications, past and present. In rejection notices, MDA provides recommendations if an application was deficient in some way and what should be addressed if the Applicant reapplies. Failure to demonstrate that the Applicant has addressed MDA's previous recommendations is noted during the review process and will impact the ranking of the application.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR PET-FOCUSED APPLICATIONS

The following details each section that must be filled out in order for the application to be considered complete and qualify for review.

VERY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE PROCEEDING:

A great deal of thought and work has been put towards the development of each application form and its requirements in order to provide MDA and the SNAB with the specific information needed to make the best possible, most effective and responsible funding choices. Therefore, Applicants should know that **all required sections and information requests are there for a reason and are important**. Do not gloss over any section.

Regardless of whether an Applicant has received funding in the past, each application must be filled out completely, as if a new effort. If the Applicant has received previous funding from this program and is applying for funds to continue or expand on a past effort, **DO NOT** refer to a previous application as a way to address a section. For example, addressing a section with a statement such as “*our work plan will follow that stated in our FY18 project*” is not sufficient and may even be considered as a failure to address the information request and can adversely affect the review and ranking of the application or even result in application being categorized as “incomplete”.

Likewise, Applicants **must not** use a web link or require visiting a website as a way of responding to an application section (example: “*We use standard methods as detailed on our webpage: www....*”). The Program does not accept information such as websites or links as part of an application and the SNAB will not visit web addresses or links during their review and evaluation.

Attention to detail is important, both in substance and presentation. Errors (misspellings, incorrect math, incomplete sentences, etc.) can hinder the review process, be interpreted as a lack of attention to detail, and leave the SNAB with doubts about the Applicant’s abilities and level of commitment to the proposed project.

The application forms do not have spell check capabilities. We strongly recommend that before entering text that Applicants first compose the text in a separate document and perform a spell check and grammar check, correct the errors and then copy the text into the form. We also strongly recommend that Applicants (or another person) re-read the applications to look for any lingering errors or confusing text before submitting.

Some Applicants find that reusing text from a previous submission or boilerplate is a time saver. However, caution should be exercised when doing this. Make sure the information is up-to-date, pertinent, and addresses the information requirements of the current application and instructions. Far too often reused text has been found to contain out of date information or errors that lead to confusion and frustration during the review process.

Applicants who have received grant funding in the past should avoid copy and pasting content and should expand on past applications with the results of previous grant cycles, how that experience has effected the program and how you project the program will grow during this cycle. Some things to discuss may be why the area that was you targeted in the past still needs attention, or why it is time to expand the target area or move it all together.

The Applicant bears the responsibility to make sure all information is correct and error-free and must bear the consequences if it is not. It is not up to MDA or the SNAB to seek clarification and corrections in these instances, and could ultimately affect the ranking of the application.

A. PROPOSAL ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

This section provides not only information needed to administer the grant if funded, but also includes important information that is necessary for application review. If this information is missing, inaccurate or not current, this may be a basis for removing the application from further review.

B. POINT OF CONTACT AND ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Information in this section provides necessary administrative information should the application be funded, as well as crucial information about the applying organization that will be factored into the review and ranking of the application.

POINT OF CONTACT

Applicants must provide a name and contact information of the individual who will serve as the overall project manager and Point of Contact (POC) for all matters relating to the project. The POC must be available to not only MDA and respond to MDA requests throughout the project life, but to the public with regards to questions pertaining to the project. The POC needs to provide an email and/or phone number that may be made public.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

It is important to the evaluation process for MDA and the SNAB to understand the capacity of the applying organization to perform the work proposed. The number of personnel (both paid staff and volunteers), annual operating budget, and number of procedures done in past years are all indications of capacity. This information is used to not only help determine if an application will be recommended for funding but also at what level. It is the Program's goal that all funded Applicants, both large and small, have obtainable goals and succeed.

A concise description of the applying organization is needed in this evaluation. When an organization was established, where the organization has worked, and the type of services provided in the past is helpful to the capacity evaluation.

Do not include non-pertinent information. An applying government agency or organization that provides more services beyond animal welfare services should not expend critical application space detailing work, budget, and resources that will not apply to this application.

The number of surgeries that an Applicant's organization has provided or facilitated is also important. This Program wants to see an overall increase in surgeries over time, especially if an Applicant has received any MDA grants in the past. Program funds are intended to increase surgeries, not fund surgeries that would otherwise be done with existing operating budget allocated to this purpose.

SPAY/NEUTER PROCEDURES - HISTORY CHART

In the chart we are looking to establish a baseline of the number of surgeries your organization does, and see the increase that MDA is creating. In each category there is a space for surgeries provided internally, at a clinic run by your organization, and externally if you facilitate surgeries at local veterinarians or through other rescue groups. Please note that you should not report surgeries that are paid for by another organization or through another organization's MDA Grant.

Public Paid Procedures are clients who have come to your clinic seeking services and paid for their spay/neuter surgeries out of their own pockets.

MDA Grant Paid Procedures are surgeries that have been done and paid for by a previous Maryland Department of Agriculture Grant received by your organization.

Other Grant Paid Procedures are surgeries that have been done and are paid for from a grant other than the Maryland Department of Agriculture Grant Funding, such as Petco Foundation, Petsmart Charities, etc.

Other Source Paid Procedures are surgeries that are paid for by your organization. This can include surgeries done on adoptable animals to ready them for adoption, or surgeries that you have provided to the public from donations or your regular operating budget.

If you encounter surgeries that don't fit into these four categories and are uncertain as to where to put the numbers, or need help putting together the amount of surgeries funded by MDA, please contact the Program Coordinator for guidance.

If the number of surgeries provided annually has decreased, it is important to explain why there is a decrease.

APPLICATION CATEGORIES, NUMBER, AND TYPES

There are three categories of applications, based on the focus: Pet-Focused, Feral Cat-Focused and Capital Expense Requests.

DON'T MIX the categories! For Example: An application cannot include both feral cats and pets in the same application form.

Generally, the Program encourages Applicants to limit their submissions to one, although multiple applications are permitted. Because there is limited time to submit an application and limited funds available, it is often the best strategy to devote time and resources to preparing one very well thought out and well-presented application, rather than two that may be more rushed, less thorough, and therefore less compelling.

✦ Multiple Applications:

If an Applicant chooses to submit more than one application, separate category-appropriate applications with appropriate supporting documents are required for each project. Each application must be complete and stand alone. Applicants must submit separate sets of supplemental materials for each application.

If submitting more than one application, the Applicant must provide sufficient evidence of the qualifications, personnel, experience, and resources that would be necessary to perform and complete all work proposed in each application as well as all the applications combined. Failure to do so will result in applications being reduced or rejected. Do not submit multiple applications in a single grant cycle unless your organization is clearly able to establish it has the capacity to perform all of the proposed projects at the same time.

If submitting more than one application, the Applicant must indicate whether the applications are dependent or independent of each other. For example, if you are applying for funding for a pet project as well as applying for an equipment grant, please explain whether you would be able to move forward with the pet project if the equipment grant is not funded. If you are relying on MDA funding for **both applications** in order to proceed, you must clearly explain and justify this in BOTH applications.

Organizations submitting more than one application **must indicate which application has the highest priority**, if the Program decides to only fund one. If your project proposals are dependent on each other and one of the projects is not funded, neither project will be funded regardless of ranking.

✦ Joint Applications:

Joint applications are those projects where two or more organizations will work together on the same project **and** both utilize the funds (as opposed to a partnership where another organization may offer assistance in some way but not receive any of the funds). In this case, a LEAD organization must be specified in the application. If funded, the Lead will receive the funds and will have the responsibility of allocating funds to the secondary organization. All joint applicants must provide information for *Sections A-Proposal Administration Information* and *Section B-Point of Contact & Organization Information* for all organizations, listing the LEAD first. If funded, all organizations must be signatories on the Grant Agreement.

✦ Applications Dependent on Other Grants:

If the tasks detailed in the application are contingent on receipt of another grant or grants from another source, this must be disclosed and a detailed discussion of the terms of the other grant(s) must be included on the application in

the **Matching Grants/Funding** section, together with copies of any other grant application or agreement. If another grant is dependent/contingent on Applicant receiving the MDA grant, this must be clearly stated, and a detailed explanation provided on how the grants relate to each other and the overall project proposal.

C. PROJECT DETAILS

The Project Details section and all the subsections ultimately should provide a clear and detailed picture of what exactly an Applicant is proposing to accomplish with the funds.

C-1-THE PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

This section should be the month/year of the start and completion date of the proposed project. With the exception of a Capital Expense request, all other projects should be limited to 12 months. Additional time may be granted if needed, on a case by case basis, on written request with justification, and at the discretion of MDA.

Funding decisions are made in August and announced in September. Once approval notices are sent; it generally takes one to two months to complete all of the paperwork to initiate an approved project. Please keep this in mind when proposing a start date. Projects may not have a start date prior to 10/1 of the project year, but please note that first allocations may not be received by the Applicant until 11/15 or later due to the MDA's grant processing workflow.

Winter weather can slow down a project and weather conditions can result in cancelled appointments. An Applicant should consider factoring this in when determining their project performance period and work plan.

C-2-PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project description should summarize what the Applicant proposes to do: the what, where, when and how. This section should be **concise** (one to two paragraphs) **with the understanding** that more details will be provided in the subsequent sections.

Applicants that are submitting proposals to continue work that was funded in a previous cycle (whether completed or still in progress but scheduled to finish soon) should include a discussion in their project descriptions about what was or is being achieved, lessons/challenges they have encountered in their previous project(s), and how they plan to address them in the proposed application.

SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is an example of a well-crafted Project Description for a pet-focused project:

ABC Animal Rescue (ABC) is proposing to reduce the number of homeless and unwanted animals turned into the Anne Arundel Animal Control facility and other shelters in Anne Arundel County MD. This goal will be accomplished through an aggressive, targeted campaign to spay/neuter animals belonging to individuals and families in four targeted zip codes of Anne Arundel County that have high owner surrender rates and the majority of the residents are on some form of public assistance. Statistically, the higher the poverty rate in a given area, the less likely those pets will be spayed or neutered. This grant would fund the actual cost of the spay/neuter surgeries (and rabies vaccine) for the pets and a transportation component to bring the animals from the targeted neighborhood to ABC's spay/neuter clinic, and then return to the owners after surgery. We plan to spay/neuter 400 cats and 100 dogs throughout the year.

C-3-TARGET INFORMATION

The Target Section must identify where the proposed work will take place, how many sterilization surgeries are proposed, and the justifications for these decisions. In order to define and justify these choices, an Applicant will

need to look at and then discuss demographics, shelter numbers, any coordination from local animal control authorities, and any other specific pertinent information they wish to include.

C-3-A-TARGET AREA

The target area(s) should be as specific and as focused as possible. A target area should be a realistic and manageable size for the Applicant's capacity. Proposing to target an entire city, county, whole portions of the state, or a large number of zip codes may be perceived as overly ambitious for many Applicants. Large target areas can also make it difficult to predict and evaluate impact to shelter intake and euthanasia rates. If large areas or county-wide target areas are proposed, justify this in your target area narrative.

Applicants are also required to provide a map with the application that delineates or pinpoints the target area location(s).

BE SURE your organization has the experience and staffing to address your target area. The SNAB will compare the target area, budget request, and applying organization's information in the first section to get a sense of an Applicant's capacity.

CHOOSING A TARGET AREA

When choosing a target area, Applicants should look at and discuss the following factors: shelter intake, information from animal control authority, population demographics, number of unaltered pets/unowned cats in the area, and any other sources of data, if any. It is always advised that Applicants coordinate with other organizations who may be doing similar work in their target areas.

C-3-B-SHELTER STATISTICS

Target areas need to directly relate to those areas identified as sources of intake for the municipal shelter in which the target areas occur. **It is mandatory** that Applicants provide shelter intake and euthanasia numbers from any shelter in a target area, covering the last three years. This information helps justify the target area, the target number of procedures, and helps the SNAB better understand the overall need in that area or county.

Omitting this data without an explanation may be a reason for **considering the application incomplete** and may be withdrawn from further review.

The shelter statistics (regardless of the type of shelter) are considered Public Information and must be made available upon request.

As it can sometimes take time to obtain this data from busy shelter staff, it is recommended that Applicants seek this information as early as possible.

You can obtain Quarterly Shelter Survey data sheets from MDA by emailing the Program Coordinator as a "Public Information Request", specifying from what facility(ies) and time periods the information should cover.

If your proposed project could possibly impact shelters outside of your county, please include this as well. The more data you can provide the more it helps the review of your proposal and its merits.

Applicants whose target area occurs in a county where one shelter covers several counties should ask if county or site-specific statistics are available.

★ **For Counties without a Municipal Shelter or with a Limited Facility:**

For any counties without a municipal shelter, or with limited facilities (i.e. dog control agencies that don't handle cats), Applicants should investigate whether the Applicant's target area contributes to any adjacent shelter's intake and provide statistics for those shelters. Applicants can also see if local Highway Patrol or Animal Control has any other statistics or information regarding the number of cat and/or dogs killed on roads, which will help give an indication as to the numbers and locations of stray and pet populations.

COORDINATION WITH ANIMAL CONTROL

It is **imperative** that Applicants coordinate, or attempt to coordinate with animal control and local shelters, and confirm that their proposed target area(s) will ultimately help reduce intake at the shelter(s), or seek their direction about the most effective target area. Applicants should demonstrate this coordination (or attempts to coordinate) by providing letters or email copies, and discussing it in their narrative in their Target Area Section.

DON'T PUT OFF coordination with shelter staff and Animal Control. They are often very busy and it's best to start early so their input can be used to develop of the application and so they have enough time to provide letters of support. Spring/summer is typically the busiest time for these agencies so bear that in mind.

HOW TO DELINEATE A TARGET AREA

Target areas can be a neighborhood, zip code, housing block, etc. If you define your target area by anything other than by zip code, still please identify the zip code(s) to which your target area belongs.

This section should include an assessment of the targeted area and/or population, including existing services and needs. Examples of what should be included in this assessment include, but are not limited to: demographics or community assessment of your target area (what percent consists of low income residents based on government census information), the estimated number of unaltered pets in the target area, and the availability of low or no cost spay/neuter in the area.

ESTIMATING PET NUMBERS

It is important to provide an estimate of the number of unaltered pets in your target area. This provides useful information to demonstrate need and justify the request for funding.

Applicants should estimate the unaltered pets in their targeted area by using the **Pet Estimator Tool**, available on the Program webpage under the *Resources for Animal Organizations* section, and then on the *Grant Applications* page within that section. Please follow the instructions to fill out this tool, and provide it with your application.

Please remember, this tool is based on a few parameters. If after filling out the tool, you feel the numbers don't reflect the true conditions of your target area (based on other data, personal experience, demographic specifics the tool may not take into account, etc.), it is important to detail this on the tool page in the space provided.

RECOMMENDATION

*It is strongly recommended that Applicants review **The Humane Society of the United States' Pets for Life Community Outreach Toolkit**. This is an excellent resource with a tool specifically for conducting a community assessment [Pets for Life Toolkit](#).*

SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is an excerpt from a good Pet-Focused Target Area section:

The target areas for this grant are under-served, low-income communities on the eastside of Baltimore County. A large number of impounded animals at the Animal Shelter have come from these communities and contributed towards the Animal Shelter's overall 2014 euthanasia rate of 11% for dogs and 52% for cats. The following zip codes will be targeted for the project: 21222 (Dundalk/Turner's Station) and 21219 (Sparrows Point). These areas are designated low-income based upon data generated from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2006-2010) (Attachment A), Baltimore County Public School Free and Reduced Meals Program Participation, and the Maryland Department of Planning Zip code Data (Attachment A). Data from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals indicates that there are approximately 2,687 unaltered dogs and 1,555 unaltered cats in the targeted zip codes (Attachment B).

C-3-C-TARGET NUMBER OF SURGERIES

The Applicant must list how many surgeries are being proposed and the cost per surgery. This number must be consistent with both the Budget Line Item section of the application form and the Price Assurance form(s) provided to the Applicant by the surgical providers. Spaces that do not apply should be filled in with an “N/A”.

If the price per surgery listed in this section and in the Budget Line Items section does not match the Price Assurance form(s), the Applicant must explain why. MDA will only consider those prices listed on the application as the amount fundable with grant funds and that any differences between the prices on the application and the price assurance form(s) will be costs covered by the Applicant with funds from other sources.

The number of animals proposed to be altered must represent a “net increase” from the number of animals the Applicant currently alters (or arranges to alter) on an annual basis, must represent a number that they have the capacity to service, and must relate to the number of unaltered pets estimated in the area (from the pet estimation tool).

Once underway, an approved project may find that the demand for spays vs. neuters or cat vs. dog clients may differ from the original Target Number breakdown in the application. Once a project begins, if the actual conditions in the field differ from what was originally anticipated, grantees need only contact the Program Coordinator and adjust the surgery numbers distribution.

RECOMMENDATION

If you cannot anticipate how many cats and dogs of each sex you will alter, please take the following into consideration: Generally, spay surgeries cost more than neuters. If you propose to do more spays than neuters and then actually have more neuters than spays, the savings can be used to provide even more surgeries. You can assume for purposes of the application that 50% will be male and 50% will be female. If approved, and field conditions change, this distribution can be adjusted.

C-3-D-EXPECTED IMPACTS

Applicants should discuss how the project will achieve the purpose of the Fund: to reduce intake and euthanasia in shelters. Applicants should discuss to what degree the specific shelters mentioned in the Target Area section will directly benefit from their project and to the best of their abilities, the anticipated extent of the project’s impact on those shelters by using real numbers and percentages.

SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is a partial example of a good Expected Impacts section:

...During our Spay campaign, we expect to increase the number of altered animals in the State of Maryland by 365 – 219 dogs and 146 cats. We anticipate our marketing of this campaign will produce a long-term effect of educating the public on the benefits of spaying and neutering pets. We coordinated with Nancy Smith of the county animal shelter. She confirmed this shelter annual intake is 5,000 animals (representing 2500 cats and 2500 dogs) and the euthanasia rate at this shelter is 50% for cats and 50% for dogs. Our target area is a source of approximately 10% of their intake and by implementing a S/N campaign in this location, intake at the shelter will decrease by at least a 10% over time, and the euthanasia rate will correspondingly decrease by approximately 10% or more. Please see the Letter of Support from Nancy Smith, included with this application.

C-4-PARTNERING

If an Applicant’s project involves partnering with another organization(s) (an organization that will contribute but not share in the grant funds) please list the organization name, a brief description of their expertise, and what part they will serve in the project (any financial contributions from partners should be listed in the Cost-Sharing Section).

C-5-A-DETAILED WORK PLAN

The Detailed Work Plan should list all activities and/or tasks and the sequence that will be performed to accomplish the objectives and goals of the project. Use of bulleted statements where possible should save text and provide clarity. This should include who will be the Key Person(s) for each significant task. Failure to provide a truly DETAILED work plan may result in funding reduction or application rejection.

DON'T SKIMP on the details. Would you consider one or two short paragraphs "detailed"? We do not. Please make sure what you present here provides enough detail so that we know exactly when where and how you will achieve your project goals.

SECTION EXAMPLES

Here are some examples of a good Detailed Work Plan section:

"The Big Snip" will use the available resources of Rude Ranch's Spay Spa Neuter Nook to provide spay, neuter, treatment and vaccination services to low income individuals and families in Brooklyn Park, MD.

The project will proceed in this manner:

- 1. Initially, Spay Spa & Neuter Nook, local Homeless Advocates/volunteers and Animal Control officers will identify multiple specific areas/addresses with high surrenders and abandonment of pets, specifically litters of puppies and kittens. Some of the cats and dogs were probably originally from back alleys. Each area will be verified as a potential low income area based on requests for services such as food stamps, Section 8 housing and Medicaid.*
- 2. A weekly or bi-monthly transport schedule for animals from these areas will be established, with central drop-off and pick-up locations in each area. The goal is to consolidate runs in specific areas, when possible. Information about the program, pick-ups and registration will be distributed using flyers, posters and free publicity placed in local weekly papers. As clients call to schedule appointments financial status will be identified based on what social support services the clients use, for example food stamps, low cost housing, Medicaid, etc. Clients will be instructed how to fast pets, asked about pets' health issues and told where and when pickups are scheduled for them. Reminder calls to clients will be made two days before surgery day.*
- 3. On surgery day the RRAR van, driver and assistant(s) will arrive at the assigned location at about 6:30 a.m. and check in each pet for the trip. A surgery form for each animal will be filled in and used to create medical records and get owners' signed consent for the surgery. Owners will be asked whether the pet has fasted and prepped for surgery, whether there are known health issues and whether the pet has been vaccinated for rabies.*
- 4. Animals will have identification: cats will be in carriers, each carrier labeled with the cat's and owner's names; Cats arriving without carriers will be placed in one and labeled.*
- 5. If an animal is infested with fleas, flea treatment will be applied to protect the other animals in transport to the surgery clinic.*
- 6. Upon arrival at the Spay Spa & Neuter Nook clinic at Rude Ranch, each animal will be weighed and given a brief exam and premeds by one of the surgical vets, Dr. Alison Mocko or Dr. Kip Imperato.*
- 7. Each animal will be induced using Telezol or TKX and prepped for surgery according to the Maryland Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners procedure by clinic veterinary technicians. Once induced, each animal will be maintained on isoflurine and monitored while receiving anesthesia.*
- 8. Dr. Mocko/ Dr. Imperato will perform either orchietomy or ovariectomy, depending on the animal's gender. If an animal is cryptorchid both testicles will be removed. If it has pyometra it will be treated; however, additional medicines and surgical procedures will be needed. If the animal has other wounds or abscesses it will be treated as well. Each animal will be tattooed to indicate it has been altered and will get a post-op injection of buvicaine for pain management.*
- 9. After surgery is complete, the animal will be moved to the clinic's primary recovery area where its vital signs will be continuously monitored by a clinic veterinary technician. The pet will remain there until it is sternal.*
- 10. Rabies vaccine will be given if needed.*
- 11. About three hours after surgery the animals will be ready to make the return trip to the pick-up site. Spay/neuter and rabies certificates prepared by Spay Spa administrative staff will be sent with each pet.*
- 12. As each pet is delivered back to its owner, the paperwork and discharge instructions will be included and the owner instructed to call if there are any questions. Outdoor cats will be held overnight indoors in a county health department building; the next morning they will be fed and watered and observed, then released back to their owners.*

13. Costs for the day's surgeries will be charged to the grant.

C-5-B-THE MEANS TEST

The work plan **must include** a means test. The Means Test is made up of two parts: 1- what are the requirements that must be met by the pet owner, and 2- how the Applicant will verify those requirements, should they be funded. If funded, the Means Test will become part of the application form you develop for your Spay/Neuter clients.

HERE ARE THREE APPROACHES TO VERIFYING THAT THE FINANCIAL PART OF THE MEANS CRITERIA IS MET

By proof of receiving government assistance:

Eligibility may be determined if an applicant is receiving government assistance, and therefore by meeting their standards, have met those of this program. Pet owners may provide proof of assistance such as a WIC card, food stamp card, proof of unemployment benefits, or other government assistance.

By proof of household income:

Pet owners must show proof of annual income (most recent 1040 or pay stubs from past two pay periods) that is qualifies as "low income."

By proof of residence in low income target area:

If the whole target area where you propose to work is a low income community, and you do not plan to screen individuals as long as they live in the target area (i.e., proof of residence in the low income area will be your means testing), please explain how you have determined your entire target area to be low income.

You must provide reliable demographic data (not anecdotal) and explain in detail how the data relates to your target area and project. This is not a reliable Means Test unless a substantial portion of the residents in your target area are low-income households.

SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is an example of a Means Test (numbers used in this example here are not actual rates):

Our criteria for service will be:

The applicant must reside in the 21229 zip code.

The applicant must have an income level of the following or lower:

Single \$19,431

Family of 2 \$26,191

Family of 3 \$32,951

Family of 4 \$39,711

Additional Family Members: Add \$6,750 per family member to the income threshold listed for a family of 4

We will verify by:

-Proof of residency by inspecting a current (unexpired) driver's license or other government ID card, copy of most recent utility bill, or other recent government mail to applicant showing address.

-Proof of income bracket by visual verification of most current income tax statement or pay stubs, or by visual verification of receipt of government assistance, unemployment insurance, or disability benefits.

C-6-OUTREACH PLAN

The Outreach Plan section should state how the Applicant plans to reach the targeted communities or individuals to fulfill the project goals. This could include details about how the Applicant will educate the community about the

need for spay/neuter, communicate with individuals who have expressed interest, follow-up to ensure the individual keeps his/her scheduled appointment for spay or neuter, handle transportation for those who need it, etc.

It is not acceptable to state that a plan is not needed. If an organization already does extensive outreach this should be detailed and also referenced as a cost-sharing measure in the Cost-Sharing section. Vaguely presented measures (such as “Facebook”) are not acceptable and will impact the ranking of your proposal. For outreach items \$500 or more, Applicants should provide a price quote. If printed materials are part of your outreach plan, you must provide the draft text as part of your application.

It is strongly recommended that Applicants review The Pets for Life Community Outreach Toolkit (**Pets for Life Toolkit**) which provides valuable information for developing an effective outreach plan for any type of project, including the effectiveness of person-to-person outreach in the community.

It is highly recommended that Applicants keep the following in mind when developing their plan:

Face-to-face outreach and follow up is critical. Radio ads, Facebook, etc. (mass media advertising and social media) generally are not enough. Research proves that effective spay/neuter outreach requires a personal touch – i.e. boots on the ground, ongoing visible presence in the community, door knocking, distributing flyers to educate the community to the benefits of the project and how the community can help get the word out about the project and its benefits to pet owners and cat colony caretakers.

SECTION EXAMPLES

Here is a partial example of an Outreach Plan section:

...The ABC Animal Rescue Grant Committee will reach out to low-income pet owners in Greenbelt, College Park, Berwyn Heights, and New Carrollton, and the zip code areas of 20705, 20737, 20740, 20770, 20781, 20783 and 20784 through printed educational materials and flyers, a dedicated website, and publicity in local newspapers and on radio and TV stations. Outreach and education will also be made through presence at area special events and through coordination with social service agencies and leasing/rental offices of residential and apartment communities. Outreach materials will be provided in English and Spanish.

-Website: There will be a dedicated website for the Spay/Neuter Voucher Program

-Outreach Committee will collaborate on the design of print publicity materials and “giveaways” for events, coordinate the issuance of press releases to local media, recruit volunteers and distribute posters and flyers throughout the target area.

-Local high schools will be asked to solicit student volunteers as part of the required community service project. Printed materials, press releases, and personal contacts will play a vital role in getting the word out about the program.

-A bilingual poster/flyer will be mass printed.

-A trifold educational brochure summarizing the importance of spaying and neutering in stemming pet overpopulation and giving details about the program will be published in both English and Spanish. Outreach materials will discuss the benefits of spaying/neutering along some of the guidelines provided by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in its Top Ten Reasons to Spay/Neuter Your Pet

-Volunteers will post flyers and posters on community bulletin boards, grocery and pet stores, local malls (such as Beltway Plaza), libraries, social services offices (such as the housing authority, welfare offices, the PG County Health Department, and Family Service Foundation in New Carrollton), food pantries, mobile health clinics, community, youth, and senior centers, as well as Laundromats and apartment laundry facilities. Broad distribution of program materials will aid in educating the public about the program as well as pet overpopulation and the benefits of spay/neuter.

-Flyers, posters and brochures will be distributed to rental offices of large apartment communities that permit pets...

Initially we will coordinate with our current contacts (social workers, homeless volunteers and advocates) that are "in the trenches" working with much of the population we are targeting. (i.e.: one of our volunteers helps deliver both human and pet food to low income senior citizens and homeless people in the area) We've found that most of the potential clients we want to reach already know and trust the above mentioned helpers and are more likely to let us take their pet to be spayed/neutered. To further our outreach, we will also distribute flyers and posters throughout the target areas at local businesses, coffee shops, laundromats, groceries, restaurants, churches/food pantries and soup kitchens. We will ask fast food take-outs to include flyers with orders.

In addition, we will publicize the project in local weekly papers whose editors consistently use our news releases. We will also utilize Rude Ranch's web sites, Facebook pages and their other social media outlets will publicize "The Big Snip."

C-7-PROJECT SUPPORT

This section should discuss any support or endorsement for the project from Animal Control, shelter staff, county government or local government officials.

WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT MAY INCLUDE PROVIDING WITH THE APPLICATION:

- Letter(s) from animal control agency servicing the project area (if this is not possible, Applicant should explain why it is not included).
- Support from elected officials, social service agencies, etc.
- Letters from other organizations, community groups, other animal welfare organizations, etc.

C-8-KEY PERSONNEL

This section should very briefly identify the key project personnel and their role. This section need not contain lengthy biographical information but names, title, and task or role they will take in the project. It should **exclude** veterinarian(s) as this information is covered in its own section.

C-9-VETERINARIAN PRACTICE /CLINIC CAPACITY

It is important that any veterinarian(s)/clinic(s) proposed as veterinary service providers can handle the workload if the application is approved. By submitting this application, the Applicant is indicating that a discussion with the proposed vet/clinic has taken place and assures that this commitment can be met, if funded. It is also important for the Applicant to explain the purpose of the Price Assurance Form and that it represents a commitment to adhere to the stated prices for the duration of the project. Any price increase must be absorbed by the Applicant.

The name and license number of any veterinarian and/or clinic proposed to be used must be provided in this section so that MDA may confirm the provider's standing with their state's respective veterinary oversight board. All veterinarians and clinics proposed must be in good standing with their state's veterinary oversight board.

D. BUDGET AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS INFORMATION

Section D requires information regarding all items an Applicant wishes to see funded, their justification for these items, and any other sources of funds or contributions that may add to the project or may relate to the project.

D-I-BUDGET LINE ITEMS

This specifies how the grant dollars are to be used and consists of an itemized list of expected expenditures. It is important to be as clear as possible. **Lumping items using vague descriptions** (such as "handout materials", or "transportation") **is not acceptable**, and vague budget items will be redlined and not considered, nor will MDA seek clarification during the review process. Vague budget items can also impact your application funding. Please be precise.

While some employ the "shotgun strategy" (i.e.: throw everything in and let the SNAB delete what they don't like), we do not recommend this as it makes more work for the SNAB and can negatively impact the application review. Please review the subsequent sections relating to Allowable and Prohibited Expenses.

Applications should demonstrate a thoughtful effort by the Applicant to limit expenses to those that most effectively and efficiently increase spay and neuter services. While there are no set percentages, the bulk of a grant request should go toward funding sterilization procedures.

SECTION EXAMPLE

Here are some examples of Budget Line Item descriptions:

Travel/Transport (cost/mile): 278 miles x 24 trips x \$.544/mile, + Bay Bridge Tolls for 24 trips - \$3,730.00

Printing costs (number and price): 250 8.5"x11" Fliers - Two *Don't Pay to Spay* fliers on each page - \$80.00

D-2-BUDGET ITEMS JUSTIFICATION

With the exception of the cost of rabies **and in most cases**, the Veterinary Services Cost, all other budget line items greater than \$500 need to be justified. Explain why the items listed are necessary to achieving the goals of the project and Program, and how this item is the best price and most effective use of the funds.

For durable items (life over one year) Applicants must explain how it will have a lasting benefit to the Program purpose beyond the term of the grant. For equipment, identify each piece of equipment and include quote from supplier.

A strong justification is especially required if asking to cover staffing expenses.

SECTION EXAMPLE

Here is a good example of the justification for a coordinator position:

This position commands too much time and energy to rely on volunteers and be as efficient as possible. We are aiming to pay a volunteer who has been doing this work and deserves to be paid. The contribution this position makes to our program and the community is significant. Working in under-served communities is extremely complicated for a variety of uncontrollable reasons most of the time and the Outreach Coordinator for our team has a demanding and critical role work in this environment. With the increase each year of spay/neuter surgeries obtained, this year another 20% or 500 surgeries, we are now at the point of increasing our volunteer outreach team and number of community ambassadors, all who will be reporting to the Outreach Coordinator. We will supplement the \$12/hr, inclusive rate, with private donations to reach an inclusive hourly rate of \$20 which we find more appropriate for the demands on this position in ABC City.

Here are some good examples of justifications for an Outreach expense:

The Maryland SPCA will design and print 7,500 promotional flyers to be distributed through various marketing channels. We have found great success with distribution of these flyers at community events, through our Wellness Clinic, and through distribution to various hospitals and animal service providers that are located in or adjacent to the zip codes that we target with the MDA.

Direct mail Don't Pay to Spay postcards to 2794 low-income households in zip code 21632. This is the poorest area of Caroline County with the largest number of unaltered pets. Although direct mail is costly, it puts the information into the hands of pet owners. Direct mail is one of the most efficient ways to deliver information. This could be the only way we can reach some of the very low income pet owners because they don't have transportation to go to public outreach events, or public buildings. If we find this method of outreach is as effective as we expect it to be, we can decide on a new district each year until all low-income residents of Caroline County have been reached.

D-3-COST SHARING AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Cost sharing is always encouraged and can positively affect the funding of a proposal. A “cost-sharing” item should be anything that **directly affects or will be used to implement the proposed project**. Any expense or contribution that directly relates to the proposed project (such as donated equipment, vehicle or use of vehicles, space, personnel, etc.) is important to detail and should be quantified to the extent possible. A best guess of the value can suffice.

D-4-MATCHING GRANTS/FUNDING

If an application is dependent on another grant or additional funding from another source, details and copies of documentation (including the amount of additional requested funding, funding source, any requirements or parameters related to that additional funding source, and whether the funds have already been secured) must be included. If the applicant is being sought to meet a Matching Funds requirement of another grant, this must also be discussed.

FINAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS SECTION

By submitting the application, the Applicant is acknowledging that all information provided in the application and in the supplemental documents accompanying the application is complete, accurate, and truthful.